

EIGHTH ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
GREYLOCK COMMISSION.

STATE PRINTING
OFFICE
BOSTON
JANUARY, 1909



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THE STATE BOARD OF PUBLICATION.

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Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

REPORT OF THE GREYLOCK COMMISSION.

The Greylock reservation was established in June, 1898. The first season and the following one were occupied in securing the money required for the purchase of the property held by the Greylock Park Association; this purchase being the condition of the first grant from the State. Now, at the close of the eighth year of active work, the reservation embraces 8,187 acres, and contains all, or nearly all, the land desired for its completion. It extends north and south 6 miles, and east and west, in its extreme points, $4\frac{1}{3}$ miles. The outline is irregular, corresponding to the structure of the mountains, and also somewhat governed by the needs of adjoining farms. A large tract, 436 $\frac{1}{2}$ acres, held by Dewey Phillips, has been acquired during the present year by condemnation; also a tract, 300 acres, situated in the "Hopper" and owned by Clarence Smith. A small tract owned by Burt Eldridge has been obtained by purchase. These parcels were enclosed in the reservation. It may be deemed advisable to rectify the boundaries at a few points, but the work of purchase is essentially complete. Land owned by the city of North Adams in connection with its water works is regarded as an extension, in its practical bearings, of the reservation. The boundaries of these adjoining properties have been amicably arranged.

About half of the granite markers defining the reservation have been placed, and this work is passing to completion. The immediate work of the State is, therefore, according to present appearances, nearly accomplished.

The county of Berkshire has appropriated annually \$1,500 for the support of the reservation, expended a large sum, as given in previous reports of the commission, and \$2,500 during the present year. There have been no stint and no reluctance on the part of the county in the aid it has furnished to the reservation.

Up to the present time the Greylock Commission has been chiefly occupied in the construction of roads. The success of this work has been very considerable. There was but one road, and that in a bad condition, extending from the summit northward, when the commission entered on its duties. This road has been put in a fair condition, but still calls for considerable labor in reducing its grades and in improving the road bed. The road from the summit south has been constructed with an easy grade, and commands many fine views. About 3 miles from the summit it divides, the right-hand branch dropping down the slope more rapidly, and furnishing an approach to New Ashford, as well as to Lanesborough and Pittsfield. The left-hand branch follows the ridge, as it gradually declines to the south, and furnishes for a long distance a magnificent view of the mountains, lakes and central valley of the county. It also opens up a road to Cheshire. There remains in roadmaking the uniting the summit, on the one side, with Adams, and, on the other, with Williamstown through the "Hopper," the natural portal of the range. During the past summer a road has been finished uniting the camping ground with the summit; and also one extending west from the camping ground to Stony Ridge, which furnishes the best view of the outer "Hopper," the finest single picture of the reservation. The camping ground lies on the line of the contemplated road through the "Hopper." Though the wants of Williamstown are the last to be met, when once this road is fittingly made, no road on the mountain will surpass it in its close association with the most striking scenery of the reservation.

These various roads not only render the mountain range more accessible, but they are needed as fire guards. Without protection of this sort it would be quite possible that

the reservation should be swept by fire from side to side, to its immediate destruction. The roads should be cleared on either side of underwood and dead limbs, so as to offer no material for the spread of flames. Now that the roads are permanent and so far completed, much can be done, by cutting out views, to make the journey to the summit inviting. If a trolley is to be built, the means of access, on which by far the largest portion of visitors are dependent, will be easy and ample. The territory in the "Hopper" and in other portions of the reservation will remain in its native wildness, to reward those who have the energy to explore it.

The summit, when the reservation was established, was without structures of any importance, with the exception of the tower. It still remains poorly provided, and invites the generosity of natives of Berkshire to furnish suitable buildings for the hospitable reception of its many visitors. The success of the reservation, provided for the extended and enjoyable sympathy of man with nature, will depend very much on the impression made by the summit. The summit is the center of all roads, and gives the key note of all pleasures. Destitution and neglect here will mar the entire effect. Buildings that meet all immediate wants, are in harmony with the place and gratify the desire for rest, put the visitor at once into a mood of contentment and enjoyment. The grandeur is present, the day is memorable; the more the pity, then, that visitors should suffer any abatement by surrounding conditions.

The commissioners have looked hitherto neither to the State nor to the county to provide the hospitable entertainment of strangers. As the expense of suitable buildings will not be great nor frequently renewed, they still cherish the hope that the goodwill of the northern and middle portion of the county will suffice for this work, and complete the reservation by a provision which more than any other will express the large and genial temper which should go with it.

An urgent necessity on the summit is an adequate supply of water. During the last weeks of the present season it

has been necessary to draw it from a distance. Both health and comfort demand water in greater abundance. It would be quite possible, with buildings of reasonable dimensions, to catch sufficient water for the year's supply. In the absence of such buildings, it must be drawn to the summit, and will be scrimpingly used. This laborious and ineffectual method ought to be replaced with one more proportioned to the circumstances. If we are not to have buildings, the needed water should be pumped from the nearest suitable spring.

The reservation is almost wholly covered with forest, a considerable portion of it primitive. To bring this forest into its most productive and at the same time most beautiful form will tax for many years the utmost skill of the commissioners. All that the present Board can hope to do is to commence the labor, and leave it in a suitable form to be completed by those who are to follow. At present there is much undergrowth of no significance, many dead and decaying trees, and trees which have long since become tough and crabbed by old age. There is thus in the forest much to be removed and much to be encouraged by better conditions of growth. The expression of neglect and injury should be displaced by that of watchful, wise and interested care. The forest would thus at all times show the largest growth, be made up of trees in every stage of development, and look each year to the removal of those which were completing their service. The aggregate growth would thus be the greatest possible, the vigor the most general and the sense of life the most comprehensive. The yearly removal for wood and lumber should take place with the least disturbance and the most benefit. Some of the European forests have come to yield an annual income of \$6 an acre. In the beginning this renovation of the forest should take place along the roads, extending farther out, as experience should indicate. At present this process brings little or no return. We are doing, without reward, work that should have been done years ago. As, however, the labor advances, it will gain in ease and profit, and in the end we shall be found cutting the best and the most valuable

timber, not the poorest. This is winter work, and in time the production of the winter might help the expenditure of the summer. We are to bear in mind that the utility of the reservation is primarily spiritual, not physical; but the highest purpose is always best attained with some wise reference to lower objects. There will always remain in the reservation large areas in which the freedom and boldness of nature will constitute the primary impression, and render the chief service.

The reservation ought to become, and we trust is destined to become, the shelter and home for many beautiful things, both in the vegetable and the animal kingdom. This should be its distinguishing characteristic. The moment one enters its borders, he should be struck with the number of living things which are cared for and made to yield their full return to the delighted eye and instructed mind. This sympathy of nature with man and appreciation of nature by man should be the chief reward of the labor bestowed on the reservation. It is for this that the mountains and their slopes are reserved as a most significant part of our heritage. So will the reservation become, in the midst of our industries, an unfailing token of the beauty of the world granted to us, of the favor of God in his hourly work in our behalf.

JOHN BASCOM,
FRANCIS W. ROCKWELL,
WILLIAM H. SPERRY,

Commissioners.

